



**AMERICAN CITIZENS SERVICES NEWSLETTER  
U.S. EMBASSY KYIV, UKRAINE**

**December 2008**

Through the American Citizens Services newsletter, the U.S. Embassy provides security and other information of general interest to U.S. citizens in Ukraine who have subscribed by registering with the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv and providing an e-mail address. This newsletter also serves as a test of our ability to reach Americans in Ukraine in the event of a wide-scale emergency. If you believe others would benefit from receiving this newsletter, please forward it to them and encourage them to subscribe. Please see the information on subscription at the bottom of this newsletter.

The Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy will be closed to the public starting December 24, 2008, until January 9, 2009. During this period, assistance will be available in emergency situations only. For emergency assistance on December 29-31, 2008, and January 5, 6, 8, 9, 2009 please contact the American Citizens Services Unit directly at (+38 044) 490-4445. For the rest of the time, emergency assistance will be handled by the Embassy Duty Officer at (+38 044) 490-4000. Emergency services include: medical emergency, victims of violent crime, destitute Americans, detention or arrest, U.S. passport loss. Routine ACS services will not be provided from December 24 to January 9. American Citizens Services Unit will resume its regular working hours and services on January 12, 2008.

The Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy wishes everyone a safe and enjoyable holiday season.

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**UKRAINIAN RESTRICTIONS ON EARLY WITHDRAWAL AND INTERNATIONAL MONEY TRANSFERS**

American citizens should be aware that the National Bank of Ukraine has imposed tough new restrictions under decree #340 that limit non-commercial transfers of funds out of Ukraine. Individuals will be limited to monthly transfers ranging from 15,000 UAH to 75,000 UAH, depending upon the source of funds and the status of the Ukrainian account. Also, under decrees #319 and #328, restrictions have been put in place on the early repayment of fixed-term deposits and on the execution of some payment orders. For further information, you should contact your local bank, financial advisor, or attorney.

American Citizens are reminded that while in Ukraine they are subject to Ukrainian laws and regulations. Due to legal liability issues, the U.S. Embassy is prohibited by federal regulations from providing specific legal assistance or legal advice to individuals. Therefore, we are not able to represent citizens should they encounter any problems with the banks in connection with the aforementioned resolutions. American Citizens affected by these resolutions may wish to obtain professional legal advice. The list of lawyers who expressed their interest in helping foreign clients can be found on the U.S. Embassy website at [http://kyiv.usembassy.gov/amcit\\_legal\\_eng.html](http://kyiv.usembassy.gov/amcit_legal_eng.html).

Please note that this list of lawyers has been prepared based on information from guides and directories for public distribution. The U.S. Embassy in Ukraine cannot recommend any particular law firm or agency on the list and does not take responsibility for the quality of their services. Please check conditions and fees prior to asking agencies for services. If attorneys on our list are not willing to take your case, they could possibly provide a referral.

**INCREASE IN SCAMS AND PHISHING IN CURRENT FINANCIAL SITUATION**

There has been a dramatic increase in scams as criminals prey on people who are anxious about bank takeovers and market conditions. Don't let the current financial turmoil make you more vulnerable to being a victim of identity theft.

If you receive an e-mail which appears to be from your bank, don't click on any links it may contain, no matter how authentic the e-mail seems to be. Phishing e-mails and the fake web pages that they direct you to often look legitimate. Banks seldom request personal or account information via e-mail. If action is really necessary, you should be able to type in the main web address for your bank and log into your account as usual. How do you avoid being a victim?

Be suspicious of unsolicited e-mail messages from individuals asking about employees or company proprietary information. If an unknown individual claims to be from a legitimate organization, try to verify his or her identity directly with the company.

Never provide personal information (passwords, credit card numbers, PIN numbers) and do not respond to e-mail solicitations for this information. This includes clicking on links directing you to do so.

Do not send sensitive information over the Internet before checking a web site's security.

Pay attention to the URL of a web site. Malicious web sites may look identical to a legitimate site, but the URL may use a variation in spelling or a different domain (e.g., .com vs. .net).

If you are unsure whether an e-mail request is legitimate, try to verify it by contacting the company directly. Do not use contact information provided on a web site connected to the request; rather, check contact information by other means.

Information about known phishing attacks is also available online from groups such as the Anti-Phishing Working Group. Their web site may be accessed at:  
([http://www.antiphishing.org/phishing\\_archive.html](http://www.antiphishing.org/phishing_archive.html)).

## **INCREASE IN RESIDENTIAL BURGLARIES AND OTHER CRIMINAL INCIDENTS IN UKRAINE**

The Chief of Police of Kyiv, Vitaliy Yarema, has issued an official statement which notes a 100% increase in reported residential break-ins / burglaries over the past month in Kyiv - from ten (10) reported incidents per day last month to twenty (20) reported incidents this month. Chief Yarema attributes this increase to the worsening economic situation in the city. Therefore as a sensible precaution, please take a few moments to review your residential security measures and adjust these measures accordingly. If you have any family or friends visiting you over the holidays, please make them aware of this increase. This information is relevant to American Citizens living in other cities throughout Ukraine. There has also been a significant increase in the number of wallet scam and vehicle break in incidents. With the Christmas and New Year's holidays approaching, many of you will have friends and family visiting. Please take a moment to speak to them about the wallet scam and ask them to review their personal security measures and maintain an increased awareness while they are in-country. Do not let the criminal element take advantage of the Spirit of the Season.

## **REQUEST FOR CELLULAR TELEPHONE NUMBERS FOR TEXT- MESSAGING**

The American Citizens Services Unit of the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv has implemented a text messaging network, whereby registered American citizens in Ukraine can receive short text messages (SMS). The SMS is sent to cellular telephones, informing the user that a new warden message has been issued (i.e., posted on the Embassy website and e-mailed to individual registrants) and providing important information in case of an emergency. Since some of our registrants do not have constant access to the Internet, this text-messaging capability enhances our ability to contact Americans in the event of an emergency.

As with all personal information provided by American citizens, we consider privacy and information technology security to be a top priority. We will ensure that cellular phone numbers are protected properly as required by law.

If you would like to participate, please make sure that your cellular telephone supports the text messaging option and provide us with your phone number in the following format: (2-digit country code)(3-digit provider code)(7-digit number) without blank spaces, brackets or any other symbols. For example, a UMC cellular phone number in Ukraine will look like the following: 380501234567. Please send the phone number, along with your name, by e-mail to [KyivACS@state.gov](mailto:KyivACS@state.gov). We encourage your participation as an emergency preparedness measure.

## **INTERNET-BASED REGISTRATION SYSTEM (IBRS)**

The Embassy strongly encourages all American citizens residing or traveling abroad to register with us.

U.S. citizens around the world who travel or reside abroad can access the State Department's secure online registration website either through a link on <http://travel.state.gov> or directly at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs>. We invite you become acquainted with travel registration and to register yourself and your family. Even if you believe you are already registered with this Embassy, please take a minute to check your record and update any information that may have changed.

Long-term visitors registered with the U.S. Embassy are encouraged to update their registration form whenever their contact details, including e-mail addresses change.

If you encounter any difficulties or have any questions about the State Department's registration website, please send an e-mail to [caibrs@state.gov](mailto:caibrs@state.gov). If you have specific questions about your registration with this Embassy, please contact us at [KyivACS@state.gov](mailto:KyivACS@state.gov).

#### **CURRENT TRAVEL WARNINGS:**

Travel Warnings are issued when the State Department recommends that Americans avoid a certain country. The countries listed below are currently on that list. In addition to this list, the State Department issues Country Specific Information for every country of the world with information on such matters as the health conditions, crime, unusual currency or entry requirements, any areas of instability, and the location of the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate in the subject country. The date next to the country name indicates when the country was added to the list. If the country is not excluded from the list, the warning for the country is still up-to-date.

Cote d'Ivoire 12/15/2008  
Georgia 12/12/2008  
Zimbabwe 12/12/2008  
Nigeria 12/02/2008  
Nepal 11/21/2008  
Pakistan 11/21/2008  
Eritrea 11/15/2008  
Somalia 11/15/2008  
Chad 11/14/2008  
Kenya 11/14/2008  
Yemen 11/10/2008  
Congo, Democratic Republic of the 10/30/2008  
Sudan 10/02/2008  
Israel, the West Bank and Gaza 09/26/2008  
Iran 09/15/2008  
Lebanon 09/10/2008  
Afghanistan 09/10/2008  
Algeria 08/22/2008  
Colombia 08/07/2008  
Saudi Arabia 07/09/2008  
Uzbekistan 07/03/2008  
Sri Lanka 06/13/2008  
Iraq 06/13/2008  
Haiti 04/30/2008  
Burundi 04/22/2008  
Syria 04/15/2008  
Central African Republic 03/25/2008  
Philippines 02/13/2008  
India 12/19/2008  
South Pacific Cyclone Season 12/10/2008  
Mali 12/10/2008  
Mexico 10/14/2008  
Arabian Peninsula and Persian Gulf 09/23/2008  
Comoros 08/12/2008  
China 07/03/2008

For more details on specific countries in the list, please, follow the link of the Department of State, Consular Affairs website

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/tw/tw\\_1764.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html)

## OTHER USEFUL INTERNET ADDRESSES AVAILABLE FOR U.S. CITIZENS

U.S. Federal Government: <http://www.firstgov.gov>  
U.S. Department of State: <http://www.state.gov>  
U.S. Department of State Consular Affairs: <http://travel.state.gov>  
Overseas Security Advisory Council: <https://www.osac.gov/>  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security: <http://www.dhs.gov>  
U.S. Federal Aviation Administration: <http://www.faa.gov>  
U.S. Internal Revenue Service: <http://www.irs.gov>  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov>  
World Health Organization <http://www.who.org>  
Social Security Administration: <http://www.ssa.gov>  
SSA Newsletter: <http://www.ssa.gov/enews/>  
Federal Voting Assistance: <http://www.fvap.gov>  
2008 US Elections: <http://usinfo.state.gov/politics/elections/>  
U.S. Customs & Border Protection: <http://www.cbp.gov> (for information including importation of household pets, animal and plant health inspection, etc)  
U.S. Department of Agriculture: <http://www.usda.gov> (for information on food products, food safety and inspection service)  
U.S. Postal Inspection Service: <http://www.usps.com/websites/depart/inspect/>  
Internet Fraud Complaint Center: <http://www.ifccfbi.gov>  
Embassy of Ukraine in Washington, D.C.: <http://www.ukremb.com>  
Consulate General of Ukraine in New York: <http://www.brama.com/ua-consulate>  
Consulate General of Ukraine in Chicago: <http://www.ukrchicago.com>  
Consulate General of Ukraine in San Francisco: <http://www.ukrainesf.com>

## HOLIDAYS AND OTHER CLOSURES 2008-2009

### Holiday Day Date Country

Christmas Day Thursday December 25 U.S.  
January 1 Thursday New Year's Day U.S./Ukraine  
January 7 Wednesday Orthodox Christmas Ukraine  
January 19 Monday M. L. King's Birthday U.S.  
February 16 Monday Presidents' Day U.S.  
March 8 Sunday International Women's Day Ukraine  
March 9 Monday International Women's Day (observed) Ukraine  
April 19, 20 Sunday, Monday Orthodox Easter Ukraine  
May 1, 2 Friday, Saturday International Labor Day Ukraine  
May 4 Monday International Labor Day (observed) Ukraine  
May 9 Saturday Victory Day Ukraine  
May 11 Monday Victory Day (observed) Ukraine  
May 25 Monday Memorial Day U.S.  
June 7, 8 Sunday, Monday Holy Trinity Day Ukraine  
June 28 Sunday Constitution Day Ukraine  
June 29 Monday Constitution Day (observed) Ukraine  
July 3 Friday Independence Day (observed) U.S.  
July 4 Saturday Independence Day U.S.  
August 24 Monday Independence Day Ukraine  
September 7 Monday Labor Day U.S.  
October 12 Monday Columbus Day U.S.  
November 11 Wednesday Veterans Day U.S.  
November 26 Thursday Thanksgiving Day U.S.  
December 25 Friday Christmas Day U.S.

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\* - When a Ukrainian holiday falls on Saturday or Sunday, it is usually observed on Monday.

\*\* - When a U.S. holiday falls on Saturday, it is usually observed on Friday, when on Sunday -- it is usually observed on Monday.

The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine may make additional changes in the holiday schedule during the year.

### **SUBSCRIPTION TO AMERICAN CITIZENS SERVICES NEWSLETTER**

To subscribe to our monthly newsletter and other updates, please register with the Embassy. You can do this online through the new Internet-Based Registration System (IBRS) directly at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs> or through a link on <http://TRAVEL.STATE.GOV>. Please see above for more information on IBRS.

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website: <http://kyiv.usembassy.gov>;

public hours: 9:00 a.m – 12:00 noon, Monday – Friday; notary services – 9:00 a.m - 10:00 p.m, Fridays only.

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Comments or suggestions on this newsletter are welcome.